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ABSTRACT

This report describes a program, "Training Minority students for Work in Underserved Areas," at Hunter College in New York City, which aimed to help support, educate (to a Master's in Social Work degree) and retain minority social work professionals in service to underserved minority communities. The program aimed to: (1) unite professional development with a career interest in and commitment to serving low-income minority populations, (2) provide training in mental health services, and (3) teach participants to develop clinical and community outreach and support services within community-based multiservice agencies in urban communities. The program also sought to assist potential participants with a stipend program. During the first 3-year grant period, 1985-1988, nine students were recruited to the program, including six Hispanic women, two Hispanic men, and one Black woman. The training was considered a success by agency and school personnel alike. The program was able to combine program development, community outreach and planning assignments into the student's direct service practice responsibilities. Students learned to intervene in and ameliorate the organizational problems and lack of community resources that afflict poor clients. Six of the original nine students completed the program and found work in social agencies in the New York City area. (JB)

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Hunter College School of Social Work
City College of New York

Final Program Report

TRAINING MINORITY STUDENTS FOR WORK IN UNDERSERVED AREAS

Grant #1 to 1 MH 18332
7/1/85 through 8/30/88

Submitted by:
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AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory is a two-year project seeking to establish and test a model system for collecting and disseminating information on model programs at AASCU-member institutions--375 of the public four-year colleges and universities in the United States.

The four objectives of the project are:

- To increase the information on model programs available to all institutions through the ERIC system
- To encourage the use of the ERIC system by AASCU institutions
- To improve AASCU's ability to know about, and share information on, activities at member institutions, and
- To test a model for collaboration with ERIC that other national organizations might adopt.

The AASCU/ERIC Model Programs Inventory Project is funded with a grant from the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education to the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, in collaboration with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Higher Education at The George Washington University.

Hunter College School of Social Work
City College of New York

Final Program Report

TRAINING MINORITY STUDENTS FOR WORK IN UNDERSERVED AREAS

Grant # 1 TO 1 MH 18332
7/1/85 through 6/30/88

Submitted by:
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City University of New York

Introduction

This NIMH Training Grant, entitled "Training Minority Students for Work in Underserved Areas," was established to address the need of urban educational institutions to support, educate and retain through completion of degree requirements, a cadre of minority social work professionals with competence in service to underserved minority communities. Specifically, primary grant objectives were to 1) unite sound, sophisticated professional development with a career interest in and commitment to serving the needs of low-income minority populations, 2) provide effective training in mental health services that will prevent or ameliorate social and emotional dysfunction of poor minority families threatened by disintegration, and 3) to learn to develop clinical and community outreach and support services within community-based multiservice agencies in urban communities.

Underlying these professional development objectives was the commitment by the grantee, Hunter College School of Social Work in New York City, to assist in the recruitment and retention of much-needed minority professionals through judicious use of the NIMH stipend program for graduate education. Nationally as well as locally, it had become clear that the lack of funds to support such education was discouraging potential minority students from applying to a full-time two-year MSW program (often leaving paying jobs to do so) or, once admitted, from completing the degree due to the financial hardships entailed. Thus, the recruitment and retention of minority students and their entry into urban practice as multi-skilled professionals with MSW degrees was a primary project objective.

During the three year grant period, 1985-1988, nine students were recruited to the program, including six Hispanic women, two Hispanic men and one black woman. Six students were in their second year of the MSW program, one was a fist year entering student, and two were One Year Residence work-study students with prior full-time social service employment. Four social agencies provided field placements during the grant period. All were in the Bronx, N.Y., and all served poor minority families with a range of familial, economic, substance abuse, psychological and social problems. Two of the agencies, Highbridge Community Life Center and Altro Health and Rehabilitation Services,supported the program all three years. The Morrisania Neighborhood Family Care Center provided placements and supervision for two years. The Fordham-Tremont Community Mental Health Center was able to participate during the first year only, due to staff supervision limitations.

Project coordination, student recruitment, and assignment development and monitoring were the responsibility of the Project Director, with assistance form the Project Co-Director and the School's Field Work Department, respectively. the

Project Director also took on faculty advising responsibilities during the first year for all three project students, in order to assure appropriate school-agency linkage and implementation of project objectives in the critical start-up phase. All field instruction was provided by agency MSW social workers, the majority of whom were experienced in MSW student supervision and so accredited by Hunter or other area social work schools.

Project Results: Student Education and Retention

In the kind and quality of class and field education made available to project students, the training project was considered a success by agency and school personnel alike. Continuity in school-agency relations productive of high quality educational experiences were developed and maintained with three of the four agencies involved. Through early coordination and planning with the School's Field Work Department and agency Educational Directors, the Project Director was able to ensure the development of appropriate, challenging assignments in clinical and community work as well as the availability of comprehensive field training resources (including highly-trained, multi-skilled agency-based field instruction and task supervisors in each setting. In placement agencies in which continuity was realized, students received enthusiastic support and cooperation; all project students carried multiple concurrent assignments providing rich opportunities for professional assessment of and intervention in the lives of vulnerable minority families with formidable social, psychological and economic handicaps.

One of the most rewarding aspects of the project for students and agencies alike was the incorporation of a program development, community outreach or planning assignment into the student's direct service practice responsibilities. Although the development and maintenance of community work assignments for casework or group work students was often a challenge (especially initially, due to the difficulties in finding appropriate supervision and obtaining time in the student's load free form the press of agency treatment priorities), this component of the field work experience emerged as particularly meaningful for learning and service. As students designed or implemented new agency services (for example, , an evening Spanish-speaking Alcoholics Anonymous group, a community information program on the range and availability of agency services, volunteer work experiences in new settings for the psychiatrically disabled, an interim outpost health clinic in an unserved area, to name a few), they learned how to intervene in and ameliorate the organizational problems and lack of community resources that afflict poor clients. Through course work and field instruction, they were able to understand the fundamental types of knowledge and skill generic to community and clinical practice, and those that are distinguishing. Overall they learned a problem-solving stance in relation to family, community and agency systems as an integral part of effective professional practice so essential to work in urban arenas beset by organizational fragmentation, overload and resource scarcity.

The contributions of these efforts to agency program and service were also notable. Although agencies involved in the project clearly valued students' abilities to work with individuals and families, and to communicate effectively with underserved Spanish-speaking populations, they expressed continued satisfaction with students' outreach, planning and development work. At Altro and Morrisania, for example, the resource-building problem-solving capacity of students with community work skill and commitment was recognized and encouraged. The student assignments there -- to develop additional work sites and an advisory council of

agencies willing to help train the psychiatrically disabled, and the planning and implementation of accessible alcoholism groups for Spanish-speaking adults, respectively -- were carried over into the third year of the grant and became institutionalized as an integral part of the agency's program.

Six of the nine students who began the MSW program and received one year of educational support through the grant have received the MSW degree and are currently working in social agencies in the New York City area. One student is working and has returned to school to finish some incomplete course work. One student was required to repeat the field work practicum (and is doing so this academic year) due in large part to language difficulties limiting practice learning and performance. One student - the only entering first year student in the project - withdrew from school within the first month to return to a full-time job in the social services and re-assess her readiness for the demands of professional education. It is anticipated that the two students who have not completed the program will do so by June 1989. Qualitatively, the vast majority of the students recruited for the project were evaluated by class and field instructors and faculty advisors as above-average to excellent in knowledge, practice performance and professional potential.

The student recipients of NIMH support during the three years covered by the grant, their degree status and current professional activity is noted, as follows:

1985-1986

Name	Field Placement	MSW Degree Granted	Current position and functions
1. I R OYRP	Highbridge	1987	Rosalie Hall, Bronx Catholic Charities. Provided service linkage to low-income minority teen mothers. Most recent position unknown.
2. E M 2 yr. program	Altro	1986	North Central Bronx Hospital, In-Patient Psychiatry. Provided group and individual counseling services to severely mentally ill population. Present position unknown.
3. J G 2 yr. program	Fordham-Tremont	1986	Social worker, Fordham-Tremont Community Service Center. Carries 35-40 cases; does individual, group and family work with low-income Hispanic clients.
		1986-1987	
4. V R OYRP	Highbridge	1988	Social worker, St. Lukes-Roosevelt Hospital Center, Community Psychiatry Dept. Provides counseling and other assistance to a low-income, minority homeless, substance abusing and psychiatrically-disabled population
5. T K 2 yr. program	Altro	1987	Education counselor, Archdiocese Drug Abuse Prevention Program. Provided drug education, crisis intervention, group and individual counseling to school populations throughout the Bronx.
6. G C 2 yr. program	Morrisania	projected 1989 (some courses incomplete)	Program Consultant, N.Y. Dept. of Mental Health. Provides technical assistance and liaison services to agencies serving chronic mentally ill adults.
		1987-1988	
7. L H 2 yr. program	Highbrdge	withdrew September 1987	
8. L H 2 yr. program	Morrisania	projected 1989	In placement at International Ladies Garment Workers' Union
9. N R 2 yr. program	Altro	1988	Social Worker, Columbia program Presbyterian Hospital. Placed in two public schools to provide counseling/play therapy to children K through 4th grade. Carries 15 cases; will be assigned 15 more.

The limitations of the project stemmed in large part from the lack of a separate field instructor (funding for this was approved but not allocated) and thus the lack of faculty field resources to adequately address some project objectives. Although an educational seminar involving all students, field instructors and faculty advisors was held at Morrisania the second year, this kind of educational enrichment and inter-agency networking/communication effort was not able to be organized more frequently due to the lack of staff for this purpose. Practice research, undertaken by some students as an integral part of the community work assignment or in conjunction with a required research course on clinical or program evaluation, was not pursued consistently or systematically for this reason as well. Assignment rotation of the style originally planned also would have required more direct on-site supervision and coordination from project personnel than already-overloaded agency field instructors were able to provide. Finally, in-service education for pre-professional agency staff was not possible for the same reason. In short, a project staff person was necessary to fulfill all objectives originally proposed. In lieu of this additional funding, the core "deliverables" previously described were achieved, but not the enriching additions most dependent on the consistent availabilty of a project staff person on-site.

A second project limitation related to the availability of minority students for the third year of the project. As one may expect, matriculated minority students are highly valued by field placement agencies in New York City because of the additional cultural understanding, racial identification and language abilities they often bring to the service of urban low-income minority populations. This reality resulted in a smaller pool of students from which to recruit the third year and the subsequent inclusion of a first year student whose commitment to education was not tested and a second year student with known language deficits. Although Hunter's record in the recruitment of minority students is above average for schools of social work nationally, it will be important to find additional minority recruitment sources and mechanisms if the type of support this project offered is to be fully and efficiently utilized. Identifying this type of problem, however, should in no way diminish the project outcomes described above. That only one student will not complete and less than 1/3 were evaluated as average or below is no small achievement under any circumstances! In sum, the NIMH three year stipend program to "Train Minority Students for Work in Underserved Areas" has done just that; the city, the school of social work and poor minority clients are that much richer for the effort.